

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing software use by a software provider for distribution to a user, comprising the steps of:

5                   storing inside the software predetermined first information;  
                  providing the software to a software user on an information storage means prepared corresponding to the software and to be connected to an apparatus for running the software, which information storage means is capable of being accessed by the  
10                  apparatus in a connected state;  
                  encoding second information by using a first key of a key pair of an open key encoding format; and  
                  transmitting the encoded second information to said software user for said software user to decode said transmitted encoded  
15                  second information by using a second key of said key pair of said open key encoding format, and to read said first information from said information storage means, and to match said read first information against said decoded second information,  
                  wherein said software is enabled when the information  
20                  match.

2. A method of managing software use as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

25                  receiving predetermined third information identifying the software provided along with said software and said information storage means from the user when said user seeks authorization of use of said software;  
                  identifying said software user based on said transmitted third information; and

detecting second information to be matched against said first information stored in said information storage means given to the software user.

- 5        3. A method of managing software use as set forth in Claim 2, wherein said first information and said second information are selected from the group of information consisting of identification information for identifying said software user, identification information for identifying said distributed software, and identification information for identifying said information storage means.
- 10      4. A method of managing software use as set forth in Claim 3, wherein said first and second information is a password added to said software and said information storage means.
- 15      5. A method of managing software use as set forth in Claim 3, further comprising the step of configuring the software such that processing for controlling said software use is performed each time said software user uses said software.
- 20      6. A method of managing software as set forth in Claim 3, further comprising the step of configuring the software such that processing for managing said software use is performed only at predetermined times including one or more times selected from the group consisting of when obtaining the software, when upgrading a version of the software, when setting a time limit for use of the software, and when updating a time limit for use of the software.
- 25      7. A method of enabling software by a user for software managed by a software provider, comprising the steps of:
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receiving software in an information storage means prepared corresponding to the software, predetermined first information being stored in the software;

5 connecting said information storage means with an apparatus for running the software, which information storage means is capable of being accessed by the apparatus in said connected state;

10 receiving encoded second information from said software provider to be matched against said first information stored in said information storage means, said encoding performed by using a first key of a key pair of an open key encoding format;

15 decoding said transmitted encoded second information by using a second key of said key pair of the open key encoding format;

20 reading said first information from said information storage means; and

25 matching said read first information against said decoded second information,

30 wherein said software is enabled when the information match.

8. A method of enabling software as set forth in Claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting predetermined third information identifying the software provided along with said software and said information storage means when seeking authorization of use of said software,

wherein said software provider identifies said software user based on said transmitted third information, and detects second information to be matched against said first information stored in said information storage means given to the software user.

9. A method of enabling software as set forth in Claim 8, wherein  
said first information and said second information are selected from  
the group of information consisting of identification information for  
identifying said software user, identification information for  
5 identifying said distributed software, and identification information  
for identifying said information storage means.
10. A method of enabling software as set forth in Claim 9,  
wherein said first and second information includes a password  
added to said software and said information storage means.
15. A method of enabling software use as set forth in Claim 9,  
wherein said software is configured such that processing for  
enabling said software use is performed each time said software  
user uses said software.
20. A method of enabling software as set forth in Claim 9,  
wherein said software is configured such that processing for  
enabling said software use is performed only at predetermined  
times including any time selected from the group consisting of when  
obtaining the software, when upgrading a version of the software,  
when setting a time limit for use of the software and when updating  
a time limit for use of the software.
25. A system for enabling software stored in an information  
storage means for accessibly connecting via a predetermined  
interface means to an apparatus for running the software, said  
software having first information stored therein, comprising:  
transmitting means for transmitting second identification  
30 information to a software provider when seeking authorization of  
use of said stored software;

- receiving means for receiving encoded third information transmitted by said software provider to be matched against said first information generated based on said second information, said third information being encoded by a first key of a key pair of an  
5 open key encoding format;
- decoding means for decoding said received encoded third information by using a second key of said key pair of the open key encoding format;
- 10 matching means for matching said first information stored in said information storage means against said decoded second information; and
- execution control means for enabling said software to be used when the information match.
- 15 14. A system for managing software by a software provider, said software being stored in an information storage means to a provider for accessibly connecting via a predetermined interface means to an apparatus for running the software, said software having first information stored therein, comprising:
- 20 receiving means for receiving second identification information from the user seeking authorization of use of said stored software;
- encoding means for encoding third information by using a second key of said key pair of the open key encoding format based  
25 on said second information;
- transmitting means for transmitting the encoded third information to said user to be matched against said first information,
- wherein said first information stored in said  
30 information storage means is matched against said third

information upon being being decoded, and said software is enabled to be used when the information match.